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## **Gov. Rick Snyder: New approach to Detroit education will help students, city move toward a brighter future**

*Proposal addresses academic struggles, crushing debt*

DETROIT, Mich. – Detroit children can't succeed when their schools are struggling academically and the district is struggling with crushing debt, Gov. Rick Snyder said today as he outlined a plan to dramatically restructure the city's public schools to improve education and finances.

"We know the system we have in place now has not worked for too many years for too many students and their families," Snyder said. "We're collaborating on a new approach to help children get the education they need and deserve so they can be successful. Detroit has made tremendous strides as a city, but it needs strong public schools to truly thrive from downtown to the neighborhoods."

Snyder is proposing a holistic approach that includes recommendations from a community coalition and addresses accountability and higher standards for all schools.

Snyder said the Detroit Public Schools has reached a crisis point where systemic change is needed. Enrollment has dropped by nearly 100,000 students in the last decade. The district has accumulated about \$483 million in debt. Test scores of all Detroit high schoolers show that just 6 percent of high school students are proficient in math and 4 percent are proficient in science. Two-thirds are not proficient in reading.

"We need to do better for the families of Detroit," Snyder said. "There isn't a quick fix, but we need to act now to help students living in Detroit today so they can have a brighter tomorrow. The schools will be a vital part of Detroit's continuing comeback, and this plan represents state and city leaders working together on a long-term solution."

Under the plan, the existing Detroit Public Schools would continue under the direction of the emergency manager and the elected Board of Education for the sole purpose of paying off the district's debt.

A new district – the City of Detroit Education District – would operate the schools under the management of a seven-member school board of Detroit residents initially appointed by the mayor and governor. They will be replaced by elected members phased in over six years. A separate financial review board will have oversight over existing district and new district finances to help ensure coordination, continuity and fiscal stability.

A new Detroit Education Commission, a five-member board jointly appointed by the mayor and governor, would serve as an umbrella organization that hires an education manager who would oversee all traditional and charter public schools in the city, review performance and determine timelines for poorly performing schools to show improvement or be closed. The person would manage universal services, such as security, for all buildings.

Additionally, this Detroit education manager would oversee a universal enrollment system that will give students an equal chance at attending the school of their choice, be it a traditional or charter public school.

The plan also calls for a mechanism to relieve the existing district's debt while ensuring financial stability. That debt requires more than \$1,100 per student be spent on paying down what is owed – money that could better be spent in the classroom helping students learn.

The Detroit Public Schools would use the existing local millage – about \$72 million per year – to pay off debt. The state would need to provide funding for the new district to offset the loss of the locally generated money with up to \$72 million annually until the existing district's debt is repaid.

The plan isn't a bailout, but rather an effort to address the Detroit Public Schools' debt while making systemic changes to ensure the problems of the past will not be repeated while ensuring other districts across the state are not hurt.

Snyder said some aspects of the plan would require changes in state law, and he is looking forward to working with his partners in the Legislature as well as leaders in Detroit on the efforts to help all families in the city and the state as a whole. The legislation is planned to be introduced within two weeks.

For more information, visit [Michigan.gov/DetroitKids](http://Michigan.gov/DetroitKids).

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